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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
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HEADLINES

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Ozkok: Turkey Neither an Islamic State Nor a Muslim Country
- Vatan
Incirlik to Be Opened As Logistics Hub - Hurriyet
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Ratzinger a `Transitional' Pope - Aksam
Oskanyan: Ankara Must Establish Diplomatic Ties With Yerevan
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OPINION MAKERS

General Ozkok: No Crisis With US - Radikal
Ozkok Demands Official Apology from Greece - Yeni Safak
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Armenians Pressure Bush to Recognize `Genocide' - Cumhuriyet
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Orthodox Christians, Jews, Muslims Uneasy With New Pope -
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Rice Visit to Moscow Shows Strained Ties - Radikal
Rice: Russia a Strategic Partner in Fighting Terrorism -
Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

Incirlik Decree to be Signed by Turkish Cabinet: The
Turkish governmental decree allowing the use of Incirlik
Airbase for humanitarian purposes by countries participating
in operations in Iraq is being extended for a year, papers
report. Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said the decree will
meet the United States' request to use Incirlik as a
logistical cargo hub. Gul emphasized that the new decree
amounts to the extension of the document that has been in
force for the last two years, and which is due to expire
June 23. `The decree is provides for improving the
organization of logistical assistance now provided to Iraq
and Afghanistan. It has no other dimension,' Gul said. He
added that the Turkish General Staff (TGS) will continue
`technical work' on the details. Gul said that destination
and cargo carried by each plane will be verified by the
Turkish side. He stressed that `blanket permission' for
planes using the airbase is `out of the question.' Under
the new decree, the maintenance and repair of planes will be
done at Incirlik. Once the decree is signed by members of
the Council of Ministers, it will be submitted to the
presidency for approval.

General Ozkok on US/Turkey, Iraq, EU, Armenia: The Chief of
General Staff (TGS), General Hilmi Ozkok, said on Wednesday
in an annual speech to the Military Academy in Ankara that
the outlawed PKK is gaining influence in northern Iraq and
increasing attacks on Turkey because of the US failure to
take action against the terrorists. `The PKK has been
placed on the list of terrorist organizations by the United
States and European Union, but that does not carry any
meaning in practice,' Ozkok said. He also warned that Iraqi
Kurdish attempts to take control of the oil-rich city of
Kirkuk could throw the entire region into unrest. `Turmoil

in Kirkuk, a problem area ready to explode, will affect the entire region,' Ozkok said. The TGS Chief denied that there is tension in Turkish-US relations: 'In this vast geography, Turkey needs the US and the US needs Turkey. Turkey and the US have common expectations regarding many regional problems. Both countries are working for the establishment of lasting peace, stability and security in the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Central Asia,' Ozkok noted. He said that there are two important pillars of Turkish foreign policy: Turkey-US relations and Turkey-EU ties. Ozkok criticized some members of the European Union (EU) for displaying anti-Turkish sentiments: 'Some circles in the EU do not understand the importance of Turkey. The EU's economic success in the future depends on Turkey,' he stressed. Ozkok said Turkey is waiting for an official apology from Greece over the desecration of a Turkish flag at the military academy in Athens. He warned that if no apology is forthcoming, a confidence-building program between the armies of the two neighbors will be reconsidered. Ozkok also criticized rising Greek military expenditures. On the Cyprus question, Ozkok accused the EU of failing to keep its promises to ease the international isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. Ozkok also called on Armenia to drop charges that Turks committed genocide against Armenians during World War I. 'Turkey wants to normalize ties with Armenia, but for this to happen, Armenia must abide by international law and fulfill the requirements of good neighborly relations,' Ozkok stressed. He added that the 1923 Lausanne Treaty put an end to 'baseless' genocide claims, both politically and legally. Ozkok rejected the notion that Turkey can be introduced as a model for moderate Islam. 'Having failed to change the structure of the Turkish state, fundamentalists are now attempting to deceive us by giving the impression that they have reconciled with the state and the nation,' he emphasized, adding that fundamentalists have stepped up efforts to infiltrate into key positions in the state structure.

Turkish Leaders on New Pope Ratzinger: Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday that he hopes the new pope will soften his strong opposition to Turkey's drive to join the European Union. 'Ratzinger voiced such views against Turkey's EU membership as his personal opinion in the past, but his rhetoric may change because of the responsibilities of his post,' Erdogan said. He played down the pope's influence on Turkey's EU aspirations, noting that the Vatican is not a member of the European bloc. Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said it would be wrong to characterize the newly chosen pope as anti-Turkish. 'The Pope clearly believes that Turkey, with its religion and beliefs, will play a prominent role in the EU. There can be times when statements may be misunderstood,' told Gul.

Armenian Attempts to Push US Recognition of 'Genocide': Senators John Kerry, Hillary Clinton, and Joe Lieberman are among the US lawmakers who have signed a letter to President Bush urging him to use the expression 'Armenian genocide' in his April 24 statement on the anniversary of the mass killing of Armenians by the Ottoman Turks during World War I, Turkish papers report. The reports say that Armenians and Turks living in the US will hold separate rallies at the White House on April 24.

Oskanyan Calls for Diplomatic Relations Between Ankara-Yerevan: Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanyan told "Vatan" that Turkey should open its border gate with Armenia near the eastern Turkish city of Kars. Oskanyan noted that he cannot visit the birthplace of his mother in Turkey because of the closed border. He also urged Ankara to establish diplomatic ties with Yerevan, warning that otherwise the European Union would not admit Turkey as a member. Meanwhile, President Robert Kocharyan addressed an international conference in Yerevan, saying that the recognition of the Armenian 'genocide' is important for Armenian-Turkish relations, because it will give answers to many of the questions existing between the two countries and provide an opportunity to look to the future. 'The Armenian issue today continues to remain a hostage to geopolitical interests,' Kocharyan said. Some Armenian Turks and Turkish academics attended the conference, "Vatan" reports.

Erdogan Visits Afghanistan: Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on a state visit to Afghanistan, met in Kabul on Wednesday with President Karzai, former Afghan King Mohammad Zahir Shah, and the ISAF command. Erdogan said at a banquet given in his honor that the continued support of the international community is necessary to rebuild Afghanistan. 'Turks and Afghans are children of the same civilization,' Erdogan said, noting that Turks will never forget the support of the Afghan people during Turkey's struggle for independence. He also pointed to ISAF's success in dealing with terrorist activities in the country. President Karzai thanked Erdogan for training for Turkey's efforts to train Afghan officers in Turkey, and for Turkey's contribution to

the ISAF command.

Gul Attends Unofficial NATO Meeting in Lithuania: Foreign Minister Gul traveled to Vilnius, Lithuania late Wednesday to attend an unofficial meeting of NATO foreign ministers. US Secretary of State Rice will also attend the talks, which will focus on NATO's role in the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Report Warns of Terrorist Threat to Turkey: The US Insurance company Aon identified the Bosphorus area of Istanbul as a risky location with regard to terrorist attacks coming from the sea, "Sabah" reports. The report lists a number of Marxist, separatist, and fundamentalist groups as potential terror threats for Turkey.

Turkish Truck Driver Killed in Iraq: An unidentified Turkish driver was killed yesterday 300 km north of Baghdad in a roadside bomb attack, Turkish papers report. Reports estimate that over 100 Turkish drivers have now been killed in Iraq since the start of the US 'occupation.'

EDITORIAL OPINION: Pope Benedict XVI; General Ozkok's Remarks

"The Danger of Vatican Fundamentalism"
Mehmet Barlas commented in the mass appeal "Sabah" (4/21):
"There is an interesting time before us. Turkey has been discussing possible ways to overcome bigotry in the Islamic world. In the meantime, Catholics have chosen a fundamentalist pope. Ratzinger is known to be strongly anti-secular. He worries about Turkey's membership in the EU, arguing that the Christian identity of the EU will be negatively affected. The new pope is so bigoted that he even considers equality between men and women as a concept that threatens the family order. . It will be interesting to see how the new pope will be treated in predominantly Catholic countries. Maybe the Catholic world thinks he will not survive very long."

"Habemus Papa" (We have a pope)
Semih Idiz commented in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (4/21):
"The new pope started a controversy right after his name was officially announced. Ratzinger's views, expressed before he was elected as the new pope, were enough to make him a controversial figure. The New York Times used to call him 'the meddling priest.' He has made not only anti-Turkish remarks, but also expressed opinions that were seriously upsetting for Jews and other Christian denominations. He said that being Catholic is the only way to reach heaven and God, and he never backed off of these remarks. . How could it be that such a controversial figure as Ratzinger could be elected pope? According to some Vatican experts, his age means that his term cannot last very long. In other words, Benedict XVI will be a kind of transitional figure. We will have to wait and see."

"Ratzinger"
Ali Cimen wrote in the Islamist-intellectual "Zaman" (4/21):
"The election of the new pope is an historic event for Germans, since a German Cardinal has been elected for the first time in 950 years. Ratzinger chose Benedict for his name, a preference that gives some clues about the policy he intends to follow. Benedict means forgiveness. The last pope known as Benedict focused on creating a consensus between the modern and the traditional, and on building bridges between Orthodox Christians and the Vatican. The new Benedict has some real tests before him, including how to increase church attendance in Europe and how to deal with the Church's ties to Islam. . John Paul used to focus on East-West relations, and made contributions to the demise of communism. Ratzinger's challenge will be the deepening economic divide between North and South. The Vatican now has a new pope who can speak loudly when necessary and seems prepared to take radical action."

"From Likeable Despot to Unlikeable Despot"
Halit Kakinç argued in the tabloid "Star" (4/21): "The former pope was a despotic figure, but at least he was a likeable one. The new pope is obviously both despotic and unlikeable. Ratzinger is a cardinal with a strong belief in 'no-concessions' conservatism, including opposition to divorce, abortion, gay relationships, interfaith consensus, and Turkey's EU membership. . The essence of the issue centers around an ongoing debate in the Vatican - whether to be a global church or a regional church. The election of Ratzinger indicates that the Vatican's reach will be global. It is clear that Turkey, in its EU accession process, will have to deal with a more conservative Christian opposition."

"Hilmi Ozkok's Speech"
Ali Bayramoglu wrote in the Islamist "Yeni Safak" (4/21):
"Although General Ozkok's speech yesterday may have been characterized as a speech to a military audience, the fact that the press and TV cameras were allowed in shows that it would not be wrong to describe it as an address to the

Turkish public. How should it be evaluated? Anyone listening to or reading the text of the speech had the opportunity to learn, in detail, the views and policies of the Turkish state on foreign policy, the region, relations with neighboring countries, and internal matters. In other words, the military leadership has done what the political leadership should be doing. It has filled the vacuum left by the political leadership. The Chief of General Staff, especially on the matter of foreign affairs, spoke in a way that represented Turkey and filled the void left by the political authorities. On the EU, for example, he said: 'what is right and what we are seeking is to enter the European Union with our heads held high. It is not only for the EU to say 'yes' or 'no' to us. I want it to be known that Turkey also will have the right to say 'yes' or 'no.''

Besides this, Hilmi Ozkok's speech was different from the harsh, defiant, tension-producing military speeches to which we have become accustomed. He spoke rationally, at a very high analytical level, keeping away from inflammatory language while limiting himself to raising questions on the most difficult issues. In this way, the views he expressed can be said to represent the views of the Turkish state rather than just the military. The speech also demonstrated that the inverted balances in civilian-military relationship in Turkey are continuing. No matter how rational and reasonable General Ozkok may have been, it is not a natural situation in a democratic country for a Chief of General Staff to enter the field of the political leadership. In this sense, Hilmi Ozkok made a speech that went beyond security issues. He reduced a whole range of issues -- from the EU to the United States, from the Southeast to cultural policy -- to the level of security policy. In his comments on the internal situation, General Ozkok replaced the language of the state with the language of the military. He pointed out the dangers of Islamist influence in civilian structures, and discussed corruption, cultural deterioration, unemployment, and government efforts to infiltrate the bureaucracy in a way that showed that the Turkish Armed Forces are closely following the AKP government."

EDELMAN